

MEDIA RELEASE

24 February 2025



Delaying the overhaul of Australia's grid risks adding at least 2 billion tonnes of emissions

Independent analysis released today

New analysis shows pursuing the deployment of nuclear in Australia's grid could add at least 2 billion tonnes to national emissions, equivalent to 200 years of Australia's emissions from aviation.

This approach would involve a pace of climate action consistent with a global pathway to around 2.6°C of warming, a level at which scientists, economists and governments anticipate major social, economic and environmental harm.

The Climate Change Authority has compared published modelling by the Australian Energy Market Operator and Frontier Economics to understand how the adoption of a nuclear pathway could impact national efforts to reduce emissions.

The analysis finds that a nuclear pathway could see Australia miss the legislated 43% emissions reduction target for 2030 by over five percentage points, and still not achieve this level of reduction by 2035.

Australia would not reach 82% zero emissions electricity until 2042 – more than a decade later than current national plans.

“Australia faces a fork in the road and we need to be clear about the choices in front of us,” said Climate Change Authority Chair Matt Kean.

“Continuing on Australia's current pathway and accelerating our progress can deliver rapid cuts to emissions by overhauling our grid with renewables, firming and storage in the next 15 years.

“On the other hand, the nuclear pathway would delay Australia's necessary transition – keeping coal in the grid for longer and leading to billions of tonnes more emissions in the process.

“Having examined the emissions impacts of these two pathways, the Climate Change Authority's view is that staying Australia's current course is the only viable option.

“Prioritising nuclear at this time would be inconsistent with Australia's national emissions reduction priorities and commitments,” Mr Kean said.

This new analysis builds on previous work by the Climate Change Authority on nuclear energy, including through the 2024 Sector Pathways Review and its initial [submission to House Select Committee on Nuclear Energy](#). This analysis will be provided to the Committee as a supplementary submission.

The Authority has undertaken this work as a self-initiated research project under the [Climate Change Authority Act 2011](#), in line with its mandate to advise on policies to reduce emissions and address climate change.

The full report is available on the Authority's website at: www.climatechangeauthority.gov.au/assessing-impact-nuclear-pathways-australias-emissions

About the Climate Change Authority

The Climate Change Authority is a statutory body established under the [Climate Change Authority Act 2011](#) to provide independent, evidence-based advice to the Australian Government on climate change policy. The authority is made up of a [Chair, the Chief Scientist and up to 7 other members](#).

The Authority plays an important role in the governance of Australia's climate change mitigation policies, including by providing advice on:

- the preparation of the Annual Climate Change Statement to Parliament
- greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets to be included in new or adjusted nationally determined contributions (NDC).

The Authority also undertakes reviews of the Carbon Credit (Carbon Farming Initiative) Act 2011 (Australian Carbon Credit Unit Scheme), the National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Act 2007, including the Safeguard Mechanism, and other matters as requested by the Minister for Climate Change or the Australian Parliament.

Media inquiries:

Laura Downey - 0427 827 928